



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

W.C. NEWBERRY

December 19, 1977

Mr. Philip Handler
President
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Mr. Handler:

I appreciate very much your having provided me with a copy of your cable to USSR President Brezhnev regarding Anatoly Shcharanskiy.

Your cable demonstrates how, in this democracy, citizens can and do exercise the right confirmed by the Helsinki Final Act to express themselves in matters of human rights. Your gesture in eloquently communicating the Academy's views about Shcharanskiy will confirm to Soviet authorities that the official concerns this Administration expresses about this brave man are shared by all Americans.

In fact, the United States has expressed, publicly and privately, not only its hope that Shcharanskiy be afforded all legal rights but its dismay that he has suffered harassment and persecution for his efforts to exercise rights confirmed by Principle Seven of the Helsinki Final Act. We have discussed our views in detail with the Soviet Union on several occasions: in March and September with Foreign Minister Gromyko and often during the official proceedings at the Belgrade Conference.

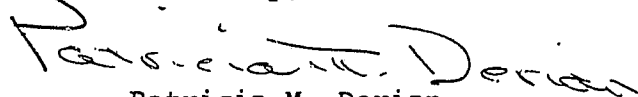
We are thus certain that the Soviet leadership understands the President's strong views on the unjust nature of accusations against Shcharanskiy, that the American people, Congress and government are "one" in

the belief that in truth Shcharanskiy should be freed, and that reaction to his trial from peoples and governments throughout the free world would be distinctly negative. The days are over when the people of this country and our Congress expressed themselves more strongly on such an issue than the Administration. We have, instead, met our decided obligation -- and continue to do so -- in conveying the unity of U.S. attitude to the Soviet government about Shcharanskiy and other brave people who have suffered qually.

We in government recognize that a final decision to try Shcharanskiy can be made only by Soviet authorities. Reports that permission has been sought and obtained by Soviet officials to prolong the investigation into Shcharanskiy's alleged illegal activities indicates the possibility that this decision is still pending. The possibility thus exists, even if slim, that the courageous young man will not be tried.

So that they have the best opportunity to understand American attitudes before this decision is made known, I encourage you and others to continue your public efforts and direct correspondence to Soviet leaders. For our part, we will continue to use every appropriate diplomatic and political channel to convey our shared sentiments about Shcharanskiy. It is my belief that this will serve the interests of detente and relations between the two countries, to show this sensitivity to the issue of individual rights, and to assure that government policies and decisions affecting people like Shcharanskiy better reflect this shared obligation.

Sincerely,



Patricia M. Derian
Assistant Secretary of State
for Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs